## "I DON'T KNOW WHY I PLAYED 'HOOKEY,' BUT-"

## The Story of the Girl Who Saved Her Life at the Collinwood Fire by Playing Truant from School

66T DON'T know why I did it," said nine-yearold Helen Marks, "but-" She paused, awed by the realization that she had saved her life by playing truant from school.

When the recent horrible fire disaster at Collinwood, Ohio, plunged that pretty suburb of Cleveland into mourning and shocked the nation, it was announced that every one of the thirty-nine pupils in Miss Grace Fiske's third-grade room had perished with their teacher. As 175 little ones met death that day, the statement seemed probable.

But it was incorrect. There was one survivor from Miss Fiske's class-Helen Marks. She had saved her life by playing "hookey."

School children have played truant, perhaps, since the torment of schooldays was devised by their elders. They have gone fishing and swimming, have played ball on remote lots or enjoyed stolen liberty in other ways that appeal to boys and girls, but few have saved their liven by dodging school.

In this story Helen Marks tells, in her own youthful way, of the escapade that kept one victim off the death roll of the Collinwood horror.

As THOUGH RETURNING FROM THE DEAD. Scores of little bodies were lying in the temporary morgue, about which a crowd of heartbroken parents clustered. The bunch of guards at the front door parted. A man, with face wan and lined with grief and crying quietly,

"Was it a boy or girl?" the sympathetic guards whis-

"A girl," he sobbed. "My Helen." They motioned to the left, where lay a long line of

little shapes, covered with blankets, tarpaulins, sheets, and newspapers. "Those are the girls," they said. Down the long line the sorrowing man went, his grief

eating his heart away. The tears came faster and blinded him as he uncovered the still ghastly forms one by one. He staggered before he reached the end. The guards caught and supported him.

"I guess she isn't here," he moaned. "Maybe—they—haven't—got—her—out—yet." For all the victims had not been recovered from the schoolhouse death trap.
"Look again," they told him. "Look at the dresses; possibly you will find her that way." He shook his head, but started at the head of the line

ain anyway. He examined a score of bodies, then sank his knees to pray. At that juncture— A little girl squeezed her way in. Her face was dirty, white apron was rent and muddy. Before they could her she ran silently down to the kneeling figure of the

gess who it is, papa," she said.

With a flerce cry of joy, he spun around. "My God, slen," he gasped. Then he fainted. There were thirty-nine pupils in Miss Grace Fiske' hird-grade room at the Lakeview School, Collinwood. Thirty-eight answered to roll call on that fatal Wednesrning. Helen Marks, 9 Fourth avenue, was marked

An hour or so later every one of the thirty-eight was dead. With their teacher, they lost their lives in the frantic rush to escape the flames that made the flimsy building a charnel house.

No WHIPPING THIS TIME.

Helen Marks lives because she was a naughty little girl and played "hookey."

"You won't whip me, will you, papa?" she pleaded as the happy father led her through the crowded streets outside the temporary morgue established in the Lake Shore

"Whip you? heavens, no," he replied, and kissed her

again. Some people will say that it was a premonition of the disaster the day held in store that made this nine-year-old girl run away from the ill-fated school, Helen Marks' childish comprehension very likely cannot compass "premonition." It wasn't premonition, anyway,

"I just didn't want to go to school that day," she says. That's all the explanation she has to offer. While her fellow-pupils were fighting to get down the narrow stairways to the safety of the open air outside while Collinwood's puny fire department was tinkering with its wheezing, sputtering gasoline-driven engine; while her mother and the others were down on their knees in the mud of the street outside praying-Helen was doing some

Obvious of the terrible happening at home, she was having the time of her life. She bought peanuts here, soda water there, post cards, gum, candy, bananas. In the afternoon she sat high in the gallery, enthralled as a cheap melodrama hero swam the river with the heroine and



Truant

I did it upstairs as I got dressed. I thought it would never over to school. I had to go straight that way. I kept around there until I heard the scholars saying the Lord's

Prayer, then I ran across to the car line like sixty.

"I had to wait a long time for the car. There wasn't any place to hide—just a big open space—and I was afraid that some one would see me and tell on me. I was going to go out to Euclid Beach and spend the morning. I could get back home by dinner time, I thought.

CONSCIENCE ACCUSED HER.

possessed me to do it, but I climbed on.

I forgot about where I had my money until the conductor come around. Then I had to stick my hand way Lake Shore shops. I met a girl I knew, and she told me down my neck to get it. The other people laughed fit to that papa was in the shed where they had all the dead kill. One old man didn't, though. He kept looking at me children looking for me. I was supposed to be dead, too, kind of stern like. I was afraid he was a truant officer.

"What did I do downtown? Why, I just walked around

"I didn't know what to do then. I knew that I'd get a whipping when I got home, and probably papa would send me to bed without any supper. Then I thought that I might just as well stay away all day. I'd get the whipping anyway: I could eat just enough before I got on the car to last me over supper.

"So I stayed. I got some doughnuts and coffee in a stand in line and pay a man away up in front.

I was all other girl coming down the stairs. But I just ran to where I new the Collinwood cars passed. I got on the first one

"People were all talking about a fire somewhere. Lots of people had been killed. A newsboy got on the car. Everybody bought his papers. I had a penny left and

"On the front page it told about a big fire in the 'North Collinwood' school. I didn't think anything of that. Our school was the Lakeview School. Then I started to read the names of the children who were burned. Down in the middle of it was my name. Helen Marks. It had my address, age, and everything. Newspapers always get

things wrong, I've heard papa say. "But the car going that way didn't come. One going toward Cleveland came along first. I don't know what car was awfully slow. It seemed to stop at every block. Every time it stopped more people got on. They were all talking about the fire.

'I ran right in. Some men tried to stop me, but I Anyway, I'll bet he just knew I was running away from went anyway. There was papa, kneeling down there. I just ran up to him and played blindman's buff with him. Gee, but he was glad to see me.

"I didn't get whipped, after all. Mamma and papa and looked in the windows, and bought candy and peanuts made me sleep with them that night. They hugged and and things and watched the people. Before I knew it it kissed me for most of the night. In the morning papa was noon. I saw it on a big clock on a post out in front gave me a dollar; he says mamma is to take me in to a play every week now. But I ain't going to run away from "I guess that's all."

## A HORSE SIXTY-TWO YEARS OLD.

Old Billy was a gin horse belonging to the Mersey and Irwell Navigation, and continued at his work until May, 1819, he being at that time fifty-nine years of age, says restaurant. Gee, but those stools were high. The man behind the counter wouldn't take my money; I had to the Manchester Guardian. His last days were spent in the enjoyment of a well earned rest on a farm at Latchford. foiled the villain again.

Before Helen left home that morning she had, by numerous and tedious shakings of her cast iron bank, extracted as well as a state of the stable and the stable bank by her parents, who now would care not if it had been 489, is corroborative evidence. With that 89 cents who have the evidence where the had the time—but let her tell it herself:

"I didn't want to go to school that morning. Funny, laws hate to go to school on a warm, sunshiny day it would not not here first. Maybe they thought it was getter. We went away up, oh, ever so high. It was great, to come down to breakfast. I tied all the money I had got out up hard in my handkerchief, so it wouldn't rattle, and to come down to breakfast. I tied all the money I had got out up hard in my handkerchief, so it wouldn't rattle, and for out up hard in my handkerchief, so it wouldn't rattle, and to come down to breakfast. I tied all the money I had got out up hard in my handkerchief, so it wouldn't rattle, and to come down to breakfast. I tied all the money I had got out up hard in my handkerchief, so it wouldn't rattle, and for out up hard in my handkerchief, so it wouldn't rattle, and only it was use that mamma was watching me all the way. I was grand. They did lots of the grandest things. A man swam a big to be was a fail that to come down to breakfast. I tied all the money I had got out up hard in my handkerchief, so it wouldn't rattle, and out up hard in my handkerchief, so it wouldn't rattle, and out up hard in my handkerchief, so it wouldn't rattle, and out up hard in my handkerchief, so it wouldn't rattle, and for so the down the neck of my dress into my waist.

"I didn't want to go to school have any appetite for anything to eat. I kept to come down to breakfast. I tied all the money I had got up hard in my handkerchief, so it wouldn't rattle, and for so the down the neck of my dress into my waist.

"I didn't want to go to school on a warm, sunshiny day to school on a warm, sunshiny day to the was grand. They did lots of the grandest things. I was grand the way. I was grand to come down to breakfast. I ted all the money I had got up hard for so two anything like that play. It was got the wholes as a fail the wa "It' was nearly dark when I got out. I was getting highly probable that Old Billy's head was among them.

## FIVE GREAT DRAMATISTS TO WRITE PLAYS FOR MOVING PICTURES

ROM Paris comes the announcement that five of the greatest dramatists of France have been engaged Henri Lavedan, and Maurice Dounay.

This brief statement-overlooked, perhaps, in the

as a popular amusement has become world-wide and To cap the news that the leading dramatists of France

-of the world-have been engaged to write moving-picture plays, it is announced that the leading parts in these plays will be taken by Sarah Bernhardt, Bartot, Rejane, Jeanne Granier, Coquelin, Mounet-Sully, Le Bargy, and Guitry-among them the best actors of France, nay, of the

Sarah Bernhardt acting for the camera! Coquelin pos-ing for a dumb show! Would you believe it? But, explain the manufacturers, the demand for this

amusement is so great that they can afford to pay big money—and they are paying large sums to these stars.

They declare, further, that the moving picture is the coming amusement of the future; that nothing too good

can be secured. And so they have engaged the best talent. e United States, according to a prominent manu-if films, three of the best known humorous play-

a New York write plays for the camera. Their a not used for advertising purposes.

' continued the moving-picture man, "the day is when we shall compete with one another because thors of our plays. The time is not far off when

by the cinematograph manufacturer, and M. Lavedan was just as rehearsals for the stage. There must be spon-

engaged to write a historical drama.

No sconer did other dramatists learn of this than they

Employment by the French manufacture.

greatest dramatists of France have been engaged to write plays for moving plays for the movin cessive seasons in Paris. For several years he was the

idol of the French, in popularity matching Rostand.

Rostand! Think of the author of "Cyrano de Bergerac"

the most popular play at periods in Russia, Norway, breadth escapes, humorous situations. This brief statement—overlooked, perhaps, in the plethora of more vital news—is of significance. It marks the climax of the success of the cinematograph, for with these plays, it is said, phonographic dialogues will be introduced.

Lovers of the Grama are asking: Will the theater pass away? Will the drama of the future be produced, not on a white canvas? Already the cinematograph thas become world-wide and state of the cinematograph in the plethora of more vital news—is of significance. It marks the manufacturers of well-professed their willingness to write plays, and they were professed their willingness to write plays and they were professed their willingness to write plays and they were professed their willingness to write plays. A series of short scenes representing phases of Parisian.

In these plays, of course, as in all moving-picture production. Possibly the "Divine Sarah" and Countries of Southern Europe—writing plays for

we shall bid for the best talent to write our plays and translated into movement and expression. While appear porting actors are to get \$40 for each rehearsal and \$200 are rehearsals, to be sure. Then the production, and it

Writing a play for a moving-picture production is simple to the expert. The recipe is lots of action, expression of emotion by pantomime, sensational escapades, hair-A mere outline of the play is written, divided into scenes. When rehearsing the actors fill in their parts with conversations. Occasionally the author will write the dia-

logue, although this is not the usual method. The average length of the play as written is 500 words. In the United States most of the moving-picture manu-

facturers employ men to write their subjects. Many are urchased from outside contributors, and from \$5 to \$50 is paid for a play or good suggestion,

"Here is really a new field for the unsuccessful story writer," declared a manufacturer. "A short story may possess a good plot, yet lack the technique required to make it acceptable to a first-class magazine. Well, the writer can send the plot to us and we'll produce a new subject. Undoubtedly the time is coming when we shall employ well-known writers and actors for the advertising

value of their names, Timeliness is the secret of successfur moving pictures. If there is a great divorce scandal, we get out a moving picture play based on the divorce. If the Standard Oil Company figures in the news and is fined a large amount, we get out a play showing the intrigues of that combination. If an American helress weds a foreign nobleman, we

get out a subject based on such an alliance.
"At present the call is for humorous subjects. taste of the public changes. We must keep our ears to the ground. Undoubtedly the time is close at hand when the rage for a certain actress will necessitate our securing her for a moving picture subject. And the public taste is improving, too. Each year we get out better class subjects."

